

TO: RTM Members

FROM: RTM Rules Committee

SUBJECT: Responsibilities of RTM Membership

The RTM is a non-partisan body. Political party affiliation is irrelevant to your duties and activities as a member of the RTM

This memorandum explains your responsibilities as a member of the RTM and as a member of one of the RTM's standing committees.

It also details the responsibilities of the Chair, Vice Chair and Clerk of a standing committee and certain Freedom of Information Act requirements. If you have any questions about anything set forth here, please contact your District Chair or either of your District's two Rules Committee members.

Process for management of adding new members by District caucuses is also included.

RTM Members

Be sure to read the Frequently Asked Questions on p. 4 and the Freedom of Information Act Requirements beginning on p.5.

Complete your Standing Committee Preference form every November (or upon your appointment to the RTM), keeping in mind your skills, experience, interest and the amount of time you can devote to committee work.

Attend RTM and committee meetings. The RTM and its committees depend on member participation to function properly. Please let your committee chair know when you can't attend a committee meeting.

Be an active member of your committee. Participate in research and subcommittee work when appropriate. Keep yourself updated regarding developments in your committee's area of responsibility.

Standing Committee Chairs

The Vice Chair will be responsible for these matters in the Chair's absence.

At your committee's organizational meeting, **set dates** of Regular Meetings for the year, **reserve meeting space in Town Hall** with Jeanne Foulds in the Park & Recreation Office at 656-7325, and **file the calendar** with the Town Clerk.

File an Agenda with the Town Clerk one week prior to each Regular Meeting and at least 24 hours before any Special Meeting. An Agenda must indicate the date, time and location of your meeting, and the items to be considered and acted upon during the meeting. The Town Clerk will mail meeting materials to the committee and post your meeting as required by Freedom of Information (FOI) requirements, **(including the Town's website)**. You may file an Agenda and/or cancellation notice by fax or e-mail. Attach a text

document to your e-mail. Contact the Town Clerk for instructions and to be certain your message has been received.

Run the meeting in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

**Standing
Committee
Chairs (Cont'd.)**

Follow up with your committee's clerk to be sure that minutes and records of votes are filed with the Town Clerk within the time frames set forth in FOI requirements (see attached).

Report to the RTM on matters assigned to your committee, or undertaken by your committee. **A majority of your committee should agree to your report before you make it. Minority reports by opposing opinions are also appropriate.**

Prepare an annual report of your committee's activities for the Rules Committee, and file it with the Town Clerk prior to the RTM's Annual Meeting (the first meeting after Election Day). Include committee attendance information.

**Standing
Committee
Clerks**

File record of votes with the Town Clerk within 48 hours of a committee meeting. **Tip:** the easiest way to comply with this FOI requirement is to keep track of the votes on a separate copy of the attendance sheet, and slip it under the door of the Town Clerk's office before leaving Town Hall at the end of the meeting.

File draft minutes of a meeting with the Town Clerk within one week of the meeting for distribution and posting to the Town's website. You may file by fax or e-mail. Attach a text document to your e-mail. Contact the Town Clerk for more detailed instructions.

**Elements of
Committee
Reports made
to the RTM by
the Chair (or
Vice Chair)**

Your committee is authorized to report on matters it considers at properly called meetings for which appropriate notice was provided and a quorum was present.

Your report on any matter should include:

- The date and time of the committee meeting(s) at which the matter was considered and acted upon.
- The number of committee members who attended the meeting(s).
- The number of votes for, against or abstaining from the matter.
- The committee's recommendation with respect to the

matter, with the possible inclusion of brief explanations for the reasons.

- Robert's Rules of Order provides suggestions for the format and organization of more detailed reports, if needed.

**Elements of
Committee
Meeting
Minutes
prepared by the
Clerk**

Record what was **done** at the meeting. Minutes are not a transcript of a meeting, and should not reflect the Clerk's opinion on anything said or done.

Content:

- Name of the committee.
- Type of meeting (Regular, Special, Emergency).
- Date, time and location of the meeting.
- Names of members present and members absent.
- Names and affiliations (if relevant) of others present.
- Names of chair and clerk of the meeting.
- Disposition of minutes of last previously held meeting (read; accepted without objection; voted; corrected, etc.).
- Paragraph for each matter, including all motions (unless withdrawn). See below.
- All points of order or appeals, including reasons given by the chair.
- Time of adjournment.

Motions:

- Complete wording, including amendments.
- Disposition (with vote count), including votes on amendments.
- Name of the mover. Name of seconder isn't necessary.

**District
Caucuses**

Per Town Counsel, May 22, 2008.

[See also Charter, Appendix B—RTM Rules of Procedure, Part VII.)

Public meeting: open to public to attend, but not necessarily to speak [that is up to the chair].

Public hearing: its purpose is to gather information

Frequently Asked Questions

How long must we wait before canceling a meeting for lack of quorum? Generally, committee chairs wait at least 15 minutes for a quorum to assemble. In special circumstances, it may be appropriate to wait longer. Some chairs find it helpful to remind committee members to notify the chair in advance if the member is unable to attend a meeting.

What constitutes a quorum? A quorum is the number of committee members who must be present to conduct the committee's official business. The number is one half plus one of the membership.

May our committee communicate by e-mail? You may use e-mail for unofficial or informal correspondence among committee members. Notifications and minutes may be filed with the Town Clerk by e-mail within FOI time periods. However, e-mailed notifications and minutes must be received by the Town Clerk in time for the Town Clerk's office to make official distributions by mail to committee members.

What does FOI mean? FOI refers to the Freedom of Information Act. The Connecticut General Statutes require that public agencies, which include the RTM and its standing committees, meet certain standards for public communication. See attached. It is your responsibility to be familiar with and abide by these standards.

Darien RTM-- Freedom of Information Act Requirements

Regular Meetings

Schedule: File annual schedule with Town Clerk when set, but no later than January 31.

Notice/Agenda: File Notice of Meeting and Agenda with Town Clerk and Library one week prior to each regular meeting. State the date, time and location of the regular meeting, and the matters to be considered and acted upon. A regular meeting's Agenda must be available to the public at least 24 hours before the meeting.

Adding to the Agenda: Items may be added upon the vote of 2/3 of those members present and voting at the meeting.

Filing Record of Votes: File with Town Clerk within 48 hours after meeting, if minutes not available within that time frame.

Filing Minutes: File with Town Clerk and Library within seven (7) calendar days after meeting.

Special Meetings

Notice: File Notice of Meeting with Town Clerk and Library at least 24 hours prior to a special meeting. The Notice must state the date, time and location of the special meeting, and the business to be conducted. A special meeting's Notice must be available to the public at least 24 hours before the meeting.

Adding to the Notice/Agenda: Not permitted.

Filing Record of Votes: File with Town Clerk within 48 hours after meeting, if minutes not available within that time frame. Exclude Saturdays, Sundays, legal holidays and any day on which Town Hall is closed.

Filing Minutes: File with Town Clerk and Library within seven (7) days after meeting. Exclude Saturdays, Sundays, legal holidays and any day on which Town Hall is closed.

Emergency Meetings

Notice: None required if emergency is justified.

Adding to the Agenda: Not permitted. Only emergency matters may be considered.

Filing Record of Votes: File with Town Clerk within 48 hours after meeting, if minutes not available within that time frame. Exclude Saturdays, Sundays, legal holidays and any day on which Town Hall is closed.

Filing Minutes: File with Town Clerk and Library within 72 hours after meeting. Exclude Saturdays, Sundays, legal holidays and any day on which Town Hall is closed. Minutes must state reason for emergency.

Adjourned & Continued

Notice: Same as "Special Meetings," except that a notice of adjournment/continuance must be posted on the Town Hall bulletin

Meetings

board within 24 hours of the adjournment/continuance. If the meeting will re-convene within 24 hours, the notice must be posted immediately.

Executive Session

Attendance is restricted to members of the body that is convening in executive session. Persons invited to testify or give an opinion may attend for that purpose and time only. Two thirds of the members present and voting at a public meeting must vote to convene in executive session, and state the purpose.

Permitted purposes:

- Discussion of the appointment, performance, evaluation, health or dismissal of an employee. The employee must be notified, and can require a public meeting.
- To discuss strategy and negotiations with respect to pending claims and litigation.
- Security matters.
- Real estate acquisition by a political subdivision (if openness is likely to increase the price).
- Discussions that would disclose records that are exempt from disclosure.